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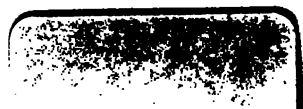
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A PAINTER'S MOODS

FREDERICK CROWNE FINE



F.C.



NBI
Crowinshield
Copy 2





A Painter's Moods



A PAINTER'S MOODS

BY

FREDERIC CROWNINSHIELD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



NEW YORK

DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

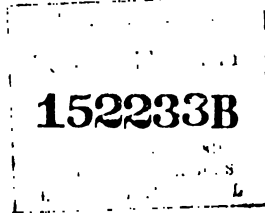
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R. L. R.

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SONNETS



COR PICTORIS

HEART, thou hast throbb'd with pulse of modest
Spring,

When first she feels the touch of love-warm air,
And mantles with a dainty toss her fair,
Sweet self in pale-green folds, white-flowered, that
cling

To flexile forms. And thou hast beat with ring
Sonorous of free Summer's songs that ne'er
Surcease, nor day nor night. And with the flare
Of Autumn's fiery hues — who dares to fling

Her challenge to the pride of sunset skies —

Thou, too, hast flamed ; and yet hast quiet lain
Likewastes of sparkling snows 'neath stillest stars.

To these thy moods, O Heart, perchance replies
Some nameless kindred heart — one that would fain
Love thee unknown — aye, for thy very scars.

RAPHAEL

HUNDREDS have writ of thee, fair Raphael,
From kindly Giorgio to the men who scorn
All kindness, and would have coldly shorn
Thee of thy crown. But thou didst soft compel
Allegiance by thine overpowering spell.
Ah, not a leaf from thee would I have torn !
Thou art to me the ripening, pearly morn ;
Thou art the flawless flower of flowers that dwell
On Spring-time swards ; thou art the perfect song
Of songs, immeasurably pure and sweet ;
And thou art gladly young, as blossoms are ;
And grandly placid as the gods so strong,
So calm ; and beautiful as Loves that meet
At eventide to hail the bridal star !

BEYOND

I

THESE craggy heights, that sharp indent the sky,
Fuming with pearly mists, arouse in me
A deep desire to solve the mystery
Of what doth stretch beyond their summits high.
And though I know that they inertly lie
Leagues inland, yet I feel that there must be
Therefrom a view of the unaspiring sea —
A heavenly greeting to the burdened eye.
Ah, the Beyond! When we shall gasping stand
Expectant on the crestings ultimate,
What shall we see? another heaving land?
Deep, gloomy pits, and peaks co-elevate
With cirrus-swirls? or a far-reaching strand,
And the vast level main impassionate?

BEYOND

II

AND yet the doubtful issue bars us not
From the upstrain : for though we surely knew
That scabrous crags beyond would meet our view,
Standing at last upon the stress-won spot;
Still should we strive, and freely cast our lot
With fainting fellow-man, and helpful hew
A path for him among the thorns, and strew
It o'er with heart's-ease, laurel, and with what
Might soothe or stimulate. Oh yes, dear God,
Thou hast implanted in us germs that make
Us rise — as yon fair lilies from a clod
Arise immaculate — and for the sake
Of thy created ones, incessant plod
Until we spotless 'fore thy throne awake!

TO POESY

My Love, whene'er my heart is desolate,
And souging airs do echo their sad tale
From wall to wall through hollowness, I hail
Thy soothing presence. Faster than thy mate,
Thy sister Muse — who in concreter state
More obviously doth shine—with bonds less frail
Thou chain'st my erring mind, and dost regale
It with kind eyes and words compassionate.
I thank thee, Love: nor would I ask for more,
Not e'en a berry from thy crown of bay,
Much less to soar with thee to sanctioned skies.
If ever and anon thou wilt stand o'er
Me as I lie song-burdened, and soft lay
On mine thy liliated hand — it will suffice.

PATRONAGE

I

THE sapient sagely say that Art can thrive
Alone when fostered by a Cæsar's care ;
That the eternal tree can only bear
Full fruitage when imperial wills contrive
With genius. What ! when iron trammels gyve
The craftsman's reach, and throne-lust curds the air
He hardly breathes with throttled, mute despair,
Then only can he flash a stroke alive
With soul-intent ? Nay, clear-tongued History proves
That free-communities in harvests score
The vantage ; and as art undying moves
Adown the æons, garnering generous store
Of master-works in turn of despot days,
Yet even more she reaps when Freedom sways.

PATRONAGE

II

NOBLE the ruins that still marge the Nile—
The slave-heaped masses that commemorate
Dead dynasties ; yet aye illuminate
Their vanities ! This cyclopean file
Of lotus-crownéd shafts, that cumbrous pile
Pyramidal, deep-founded, desolate
Upon an Empire's sands, still animate
The fancy, and reveal what state erstwhile
A princely Pharaoh held. Impressive power !
And yet upon the rock that sweeps the seas
Beyond the olive-groves, there still doth gleam
The record of a free-helmed state — the flower
Of Art. Ictinus, Phidias, Pericles !
Names that were then, names that are now supreme !

PATRONAGE

III

THE microscopic state (mere miniature
Of democratic Rome, the type) did wed
With Art, and the gigantic issue spread
O'er Europe's face, and now the world doth lure
With fantasy and craft — so passing pure
And lovable! And fair it mantled, fed
On Liberty and Pride, till hands blood-red,
Imperial, sateless, did for fear immure
It in subserviency ; whereon it grew
Corrupted by a restless palace-pomp,
And churchly garishness — a braggart thing !
But in the freer days it fell like dew
From dawn's chaste sky when not a breath doth romp
From stormy lairs, and early birds soft sing.

PATRONAGE

IV

PERCHANCE I strike too strenuous a note
On ranging Liberty's wide-compassed lute
Impatient of control, perchance impute
An undue bane to tyranny, nor quote
Benignant instances, and overgloat
On sweet free-will, or blindly persecute
The persecutor. After all, to fruit
The tree doth need the care that would promote
Its fruitfulness, and husbandry to give
It pregnant days. A nerving patronage
Is breath of life to Art; Empire, Free-State,
And Church through *patronage* have made it live,
And left from orient dawn rich heritage
To the world's noon. Shall I discriminate?

PATRONAGE

V

BUT yet, but yet instinctively I feel
That Liberty doth give the broader scope
The while she fosters, and doth wider ope
Art's perfumed petals. As She doth appeal
To Country's love, so Despots show their zeal
In Vanity, their narrower selfish hope
For Dynasty, that makes the artist grope,
A sycophant. Howe'er, they could not deal —
These great ones — with the greater heritors
Of Tuscany's free art, except as peers ;
Since well they knew that genius no control
Would brook which curbs. Nor Prince, nor Emperors,
Nor sovereign Popes with wheedlings, threats, or
sneers
Could crush their high indomitable Soul !

PATRONAGE

VI

AND who shall say beneath thy fostering care,
O great Republic — greater yet to be —
The coryphæus of the chorus free
Of vital, philanthropic States that share
Thy privilege, and hope of those that wear
The yoke — O who shall say to what degree
Of splendor 'neath thy care we may not see
Art soar? Thy lot it may be to compare
With Egypt, Greece, or Rome in all their blaze
Triumphant — yea to better them — a feast
For chastened taste and beauty-craving eyes.
If Thou dost will it so. For if in craze
Of gain Thou flamest — garish Mammon's priest —
It may be thine the world to *vulgarize*.

IN MEMORIAM, F. W. C.

[1843-1866. Wounded at Winchester, Antietam, Gettysburg, and in the Atlanta Campaign ; died at Albano, Italy.]

I

My Brother, through a cloud-break in the years
Dark-spreading ; through the rack of stormy fray,
I see thee in thy blue, boyish and gay,
As though thy playmates were thy girl compeers,
Not the swift red-flecked brood, the charioteers
Of Death — war's Living soul. And thou didst play
With these, alas, most fearfully ! One day —
When bugles called no more, when victors' cheers
Long since had echoing died — thy captain told
Me that in agony of sore retreat
He turned, and saw thee infinitely brave,
Hurling thy challenge to the foe fivefold
And flushed — then fall. Yet was this untrumped
feat
But one of many ere thou found'st thy grave.

IN MEMORIAM

II

How oft it is that in some gracile frame
A lion's heart doth find its native lair ;
That downy cheeks, and skin as smoothly fair
As Cupid's own, in prowest deeds do shame
Some Hercules hirsute, or pluck the fame
From brawny athletes' weathered brows, whene'er
A holy, righteous Cause doth wildly flare
From peak to answering peak its danger-flame.
So wert thou hearted, brother rose and white,
A paladin caparisoned with flowers,
Supremely brave when, in the gathering hours,
War-smitten thou wert laid afar among
Soft hills, and saidst — while tears obscured my
sight —
“ I 'm not afraid to die, although too young.”

APOLOGIA

I

WEIGH me not, friends, as though I wrote in prose
Oracularly, nor my judgment blame,
If with a fiery utterance I inflame
My speech at times, till seeming it oppose
The truth : for History teaches that truth owes
Its final triumph, not to measured, tame,
And temperate phrase, but as the bards proclaim
It on their burning lyres until it grows
Imperious. Thus the artist dominates.
He looks upon the maple's golden sheaf,
Flamboyant on the autumn's vaulted blue,
Supremely deep, and then exaggerates
His color-terms — intense beyond belief —
Till these false notes seem truer than the true.

APOLOGIA

II

NOR would I that ye always hold me true
To lofty aims ; for I am often slave
To the swift moment's mood — now gay, now grave —
To some sweet dream as passing as the dew
That pearls the white-necked dawn, whene'er anew
The flushing sun diurnally doth pave
His flaming way with gold. Or I may rave
To-day o'er what to-morrow I may view
Unmoved. The sadness of a mourning sky
I praise, because it concords with a heart
Of tears. Anon the fleckless blue above
I laud to equal height, and glorify
In song. Or when I heed with what sure art
Fair Julia queens — I swear 't is she I love.

BIRDS!

AYE, out it crops the primal thirst to kill!
And life-lust quickens in thy cruel eye—
The lust to slay some feathered ecstasy,
Some sailing gorgeousness, more vivid still
Than intertissued miracle of skill
By weaver's hand. And thou wilt give the lie
In manhood to our prized philanthropy
Sown in thy barren heart. For thou wilt thrill
To blood like beast, and wilt imbruted yearn
To slay some larger thing that yields to sight
More copious spectacle of pain and gore.
And then thy jaded appetite will burn
To flesh its sword in fierce, unholy fight
With fellow man. O Christ, where is thy lore?

UNSELFISHNESS

Let me not over-muse on my own soul,
Nor whether this, or that, would much abate
Or raise its guerdon in a future state,
Or e'en in this. But let its beaconed goal
Be others' betterment: and let its whole
Unselfish striving be to elevate
Some spirit prone to heights commensurate
With my high zeal: and let it fast enroll
Among the inspired those who await the spark
To kindle into flame potential power.
And when my setting star doth blanch the thinned,
Faint moments of my life, if then I mark
A single soul that through my sin doth flower,
Then let me gasp, "I'm glad that I have sinned."

THE BORGIA APARTMENTS, VATICAN

If splendor charm, then turn bewildered eyes
Upon the groined vault and rich lunette,
Where Pinturicchio hotly pressed did let
His fancy riot run, and did devise
Unheard-of splendors, potent to surprise
Even a Borgia's dream. And here he set
The cruel Spanish bull ; there inlaced fret,
Framing dense-peopled scenes ; here studded skies
With gilded boss ; and there with deft-feigned form
He mixed relief to magnify the glow,
Caring but little for the glareless chaste.
Nor spared he costly blue, nor gold, nor warm,
Ensanguined tints, nor palette's utmost show
To gratify a pontiff's savage taste.

ALLEVIATION

I

UNNERVED I lie upon the Eastern shore,
And contemplate the dazzling rain-bowed gleam
From stranded life sun-generate — mere dream
Of summer seas — and lagging waves that pour
Upon the rocks emporphyrized before
A coaxing breeze, and note the briny cream
That curdles up the sands, the streaming steam
From eager launch, the sails, and feathered oar.
And it suffices me to gaze and think :
For in my earliest years I ne'er did aught
But play upon this soothing ocean rim
Grief-free, not having neared my manhood's brink,
Nor felt things deeply, nor a sad note caught
From the world's dirge, nor lipped life's acrid brim.

ALLEVIATION

II

AND all the more I love to gaze, and scent
The fresh salt waves, in that a bitter air
Rolls down from verdured hills far inland, where
Harsh, festering ills have tainted it, though blent
With joy — yes, a poor starveling joy — that's meant
To lengthen torture: for our flesh can bear
But modicum of woe, and arch despair
Might break the heart before its force be spent.
Oh, strange it is that virid mountain lawns
Tracing with azure shades the comely trees;
That renovating sweets distilled from heaven —
Glinting with earliest cheer, when welcome dawns
The radiance soaring from far orient seas —
The mass of sanest Life with gall should leaven.

THE NAPOLEONIC CULT

Nor the imperial ermine that he wore,
Nor royal bees, nor gleaming eagles won
By genius, flashing like a strong young sun
Fresh born of night in splendent upward soar
From rugged hearthstone to a piled-up score
Of sumptuous thrones ; not Cæsar's deeds outdone,
Nor Philip's son's, nor miracles that stun
The sense, nor halo of the conqueror
Alone enthrall — though these in part do fire
The soul. But chiefly, O Republic's child,
That thou, a *parvenu*, didst ring the knell
Of Right Divine, and that thou mad'st a pyre
Of Privilege. Yet when thy star beguiled
Thee to play despot — then the curtain fell.

PARTY SLAVERY

Oh hard it is to feel the crushing strain
Of party-law, when one would consecrate
His whitest flame to the beloved State
That rears. Oh hard it is to bear the pain
Of silent exile ; to be thrust amain
From council-halls where men deliberate —
Settling with “ aye ” or “ no ” a nation’s fate —
Because of cleanest heart and clearest brain.
Could but ideals’ expression calmly flow
Through unchoked channels into the great sea
Of public turbulence, as yonder stream
Untrammelled lapses limpidly and slow
Into the pool that greets its clarity —
Then might a freeman serve the State, I deem.

SLEEPLESSNESS

I ROSE and saw the pallid, crescent light
Of clear, cold dawn behind the massive hill
Tracing the sable, crest-torn pines, while still
Upon the hither slopes soft lay the night.
And then too well I knew that with a might —
Puissant and adequate — crag, vale, and rill
Their cyclopean toils would soon fulfill,
Refreshed by sleep, when she should take her flight.
But I whom she unkind had courted not?
Should I be equal to the daily task?
Or must I self to minor deed condemn?
Must half-achievement be my lesser lot?
Then pale dawn breathed, as I these things did ask,
“God gave to thee a *will*, but not to them.”

IN THE VILLA BORGHESE

O SPRING-TIME lawns, and cleaving daisies gay,
How brave ye interlace your fret altern
Of green and rose around the ilex stern !
And with what nonchalance ye blithe inlay
Mosaics 'neath majestic pines ; or play
Around some marble god, or mossy urn,
Or venerable shrine ! Of what concern
To you these eerie groves wherein may stray
The virgin goddess of some sacred pool
Bedimmed with shadows of austerest green ?
But yet we could not spare your lively hue
On this dark tapestry, low-toned and cool,
No more than in a life of cloudy mien,
Could we forego the vivid bursts of blue.

AT EVENSONG

EMOTIONLESS, from off the squalid street
I walk into the mystic atmosphere
Tinctured with incense ; while from pier to pier
Roll the great waves of song divinely sweet,
Pulsing upon the ear like tuneful beat
Of squadroned Seraphs' wings upon the clear,
Blue air of heaven. Beatified I hear
Anthems and surging antiphons that meet
Aloft the trembling groins ; and what is best,
No hortatory voice to heed the wrong
There is in me — well known. Whether these rites
Be hindrance to the aspiring soul, or zest,
I cannot say. Yet at this evensong
They raised my prostrate heart to thrilling heights !

TO BYRON

THOSE who are kind to us in harassed hour
And in our sorest need give sympathy—
With whom it is, indeed, heart's-ease to be —
We love. Thou often dost reveal that power,
Sad Bard, when tearful, ruthless clouds dark lower.
Oh, would that I might lute in turn to thee
My thanks, and tune my lay so luringly
That even thou mightst hear, O pale, wild flower
Of the ungoverned sea, which thou didst hymn
So true. No wonder! for thine eloquence
Is as resistless as the billow born
Of Arctic gales; and thy more playful whim
As sparkling, too. And thou for continence
In utterance, dost show a kindred scorn.

FOUND!

WHAT bitterness to seek what most we crave,
And not to find it! Tired, we cannot tire
The demon of Unrest, nor pale Desire,
Nor haggard, endless Quest! However brave
We seem and full of Hope, her empty grave
Yawns obvious. Ceaseless, ceaseless we inquire
For our heart's dearest love, although the fire
That beacons us grows faint, and that which gave
Us once a heavenly happiness would seem
Forever lost. But yet no ecstasy
Can equal that, when, in such desperate strait,
There sudden rifts our night like cloud-burst gleam
The yearned-for vision, and in our wild, free
Arms we reap it! Oh joy insatiate!

THE ARTIST'S NEED

Not unconsidered praise the artist needs
His golden minims from the grosser ore
To liberate. Such praise should be no more
To him than the unobtrusive air he heeds
Not as he breathes ; for flattery impedes
The preening of his plumes on which must soar
His chaffless, winnowed thoughts, if he would score
A victory with unephemeral deeds.
Not myriad, mimicked plaudits, but at least
One true believer, *one* who has the cult,
One bigot in the faith, *one* worshipper
Devoutly bowed expectant towards the East
To hail his rising Flame, and to exult
Thereon — a solitary minister !

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA — A VARIANT

WHEN to thine eyes I glanced from off the book,
And there perceived the balanced, crystal tear,
That welled from inmost sources purling near
To the heart's holiest shrine, and saw thy look
In perfect concord with the tale that shook
The chords of Life pulsating with sincere
Compassion ; then, my Love, thou didst appear
My dream's ideal. For I no more mistook
A native, meet reserve for lack of heart.
And I, all heedless, should have cast aside
The tome, and kissed away the tears that shone
Like stars, holding thee fast, and without art
Told my own tale, and said, " Wilt thou abide
With me for aye, dear Love ? " — But I read on.

TO AN ACTRESS

I

WHAT may thy story be? I am not sure ;
Expressions lie, and often craft conceals
The character. To me thy mask reveals
A drama's scar, the garnered joys that lure
To bitter aftermath ; thy lips, so pure,
Bespeak capacities for mirth that heals
All pain, capacities for pain that steals
All mirth ; thine eyes, to him who wins, secure
Felicities undreamed, but yet declare
Felicities entombed ; and thy low brow,
Tressed like the dusk, blends not the even light
And shade of sanctioned life — alas, its fair,
Young flesh is modeled by the furious plough
Of unleashed passion in its costly flight.

TO AN ACTRESS

II

ELSE how couldst thou attune us to thy mood,
And make us shed corroborative tear,
And force reluctant echo to thy clear,
Contagious laugh — us, who in solitude
Have wept and laughed alternately, imbrued
With misery or joy? Thou couldst not sear
The tempered heart, nor draw sweet tones of cheer
From o'er-touched chords, unless in lessons rude
Thou hadst fulfilled thy fruitful schooling-time.
Untried, thou mightst deceive some fledgling youth
Perchance — not us. Only the shadowed eye,
And furrowed brow ; only the note sublime
Of suffering, and convincing ring of truth
Can the sore-travailed spirit satisfy.

TO SOME AUTHORS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

For Art's sake decency! Oh chastely draw
The veil o'er acts unnamable and scenes
Which Nature in discrimination screens
With pall impenetrable. Let your law
Be Beauty — Beauty without fleck, or flaw —
That never by the least suggestion weans
From health — that o'er the spreading darkness
sheens,
Like welcome stars o'er dusky deeps that awe.
Think you the Spartan plan to emphasize
The loathsomeness of vice, by coarse display
Intemperate, the sanest mode to make
A youth vice-proof? Why not the lesson wise,
And stern rebuke in Christ's own sweeter way?
Or love ye filth for very dollars' sake?

POLICY

Look at that straining, pliant, white-limbed tree,
At odds with furious, plunging, western gales,
Swinging to leeward ! How it dips, and quails,
And yields ! To leeward in conformity
With prudence : ne'er to windward with a free,
Bold thrust ! Always upright when calm prevails,
When tawny skies have passed, and opal sails
Are spread on heaven's tranquil, sighless sea !
And there are those who drift along the tide,
Who bow to vogue, who cringe to stronger will,
And raise the voice in concord with the shout
That dominates. Such men serene abide
And prosper ; while *they* sink who reckless thrill
To storm, who dare recalcitrant to doubt.

“THE NEBULAR HYPOTHESIS”

(TO E. S. H.)

Your graphic tale of this world's earliest stage
Was tempered with but one supreme regret,
That the deep-pealing voice of him had set
In silence, who transcribed on peerless page
The flagrant pit, where those who flung their gage
To preordained defeat, and did abet
The God-contemning one, were sore beset
By all the fiery fury that his age
Could conjure then. But had he only known
What we know now — the transcendental state
Of awfulness — could he have eyeless seen
The molten rain, the rack metallic blown
By sundering gales, and tides inordinate;
Oh what a fearful Hell his would have been!

IN A SANCTUARY

STERNLY the saints looked down from dome of gold,
Which echoed and re-echoed the rich glow
From lights, wherein the artisan did sow
His sapphire seeds amain. From the nave's cold,
Aerial vault, deep blue, the manifold,
Reverberating stars shone mute. Below,
The shadowy aisles ; beyond, the sombre show
Of metaled apse, where onyx shafts uphold
The glinting baldachin. While dreaming here
Soft dreams of boundless things, I did perceive
Two souls oblivious next a massive pier.
Ardent the one, as he to her did weave
His fiery tale — of what? — I could not guess,
Whether foul crime, or crownéd happiness.

THIS APRIL DAY

THE restless wintry gales have whirled away —
And yet they brought a calmness to my soul,
And through their wilder tumult did control
Its turbulence. But on this April day —
When broad white rivers beamily do stray
Through vales ; when pools quiescent and the whole
Earth's face in glorious sheen do skyward roll
Their radiancy, and light with light repay —
On this glad April day, do thou, O Sun,
Shine with thy fruitful springtime flame on me.
Then like the quiet pools that glassy mate
Thy image, and the rivers white that run
Through vales, and the bright glebe that answers
thee,
I, too, transplendent beams will radiate.

TO THE TRAGIC MUSE

THOU touchedst me heart-deep, Melpomene,
Last eve ; for when the timely curtain fell
Upon the twain, to fields of asphodel
I would have followed hence, that I might be
With them among the shades, and hold a free,
Sweet parle, and bide awhile. Alas, thy spell
Was rudely broken by the tearless swell
Of shrill applause from that vast human sea,
Shouting to indecorous, smirking life
Before the garish lights the gentle dead.
But when in wakeful hours I was alone,
And the thick air of sable night was rife
With phantoms hurtling round my throbbing head,
I made that sombre tragedy my own.

TO A HOLY FAMILY

II

SWEET influence of gentle Motherhood,
Thou haloest with joy the Life begun,
And smilest comfort when its little sun
Is veiled by clouds as yet not understood.
And Character, thou teachest that which should
Be taught unflinching, if the race to run
Prove fruitful, if the things to do be done
Aright, if years be coronate with good.
Ah, thus we dreaming artists love to see
The incipience of the sanctified career ;
To fancy that beneath a smile sublime,
Trained by a hand of fond austerity,
The perfect man is grown. And yet we hear
Of prophets reared midst negligence and crime !



TO A HOLY FAMILY

III

O'ER all our loves — aye, even love of gold
Which dureth when the craze of sex is spent —
The mother's for her son is prevalent.
Alone disinterested ! Ah, behold
The rest ! Like autumn leafflets, aureoled
With fleeting flames and every blandishment
Of hue, they whirl with airs incontinent
To sereness — from magnificence to mold !
Thrice blessed Church, which aptly didst inspire
This lovely cult that resurrects the heart
Dead in the bitterness of wanton love ;
That recreates belief ; that still doth fire
The hand to trace with its diviner art
This nearest thing on Earth to things Above !

NOR TIME, NOR SPACE

HAD ageless Time, the healer, questioned then,
I should have answered in sincerity,
“O Time, kind Time, I am completely free
From grievous heart-throes, and once more ’mong
men

I hold my usual way, and am again
My sanest self.” Had in her clemency
Wide Space her soft inquiries made of me,
I should have said, “O Space, ’t is now as when
I was heart-whole.” But suddenly, one day,
I bent my hapless, inadvertent view
Upon a radiant face, so like to one
That *was*, my startled blood ran ashen-gray !
And then, O Time, O Space, too well I knew
That all your work remedial was undone.

IN RAPHAEL'S LOGGIE

I

WHEN Spring, the Siren, stills the balsamed air,
I love to wander through the long arcade,
And turn alternate gaze from hues that fade
To everlasting hues upon the fair,
Far Alban hills that gracious cool the glare
Trembling above old Rome, which brooks no shade
In noon-time's blaze. Never in such a glade
Did Adam walk with Eve. Pilasters bear
The curving arch in repetition sweet
Adown the flowered aisle. Soffit, and wall,
And vault burst into harmonies replete
With gayeties, while low reliefs enthrall.
Picture, and fret, and floriate scroll impart
The Law — Freedom controlled — the perfect Art.

IN RAPHAEL'S LOGGIE

II

HAD Raphael lived his three-score years and ten,
Armed with Art's peaceful weapons cap-à-pie !
With nature sweet as Love ; with gift to see
Things in their rarest semblances and then
Portray them in such wise that after men
For generations hold them types ; with free,
Expanding sympathies for each degree
Of art — oh had he only lived ! But when
In latter years he turned his chiefest mood
From easel-work, and as an Architect
The three great crafts most deftly unified ;
And when he just commenced what would have stood
The ages' praise, all potent to erect,
To color, and to carve — Ah, then he died !

TO A DRAWING BY INGRES

THY fame we cannot always comprehend,
Knowing thee not. For naught could violate
That vision which thy peers did captivate,
Nor thine unyielding line — that would not bend
To easeful play, nor would in conscience lend
Itself to mode. And yet thine art so great,
Doth not on corniced canvas fascinate,
But on the penciled sheets, that thou didst vend
For bed and board — and we now thank thy need.
Whilst I am versing, lovingly I gaze
Upon thy drawing, pure as an antique,
To which it may not abdicate its meed.
And I should say — nor do I overpraise —
'T were worthy Raphael, or the chastest Greek.

ON AN ANTIQUE CROSS

“Giesu e Maria, a vi dono el cuore e l' anima mia.”

“Jesus and Mary, all my heart and soul
I give to you.” This legend reverent
Was chiseled on a low-priced ornament —
An antique brazen cross — I bought where roll
Thick, tawny waves. Ah, here is writ the whole
Wild story of a thirst incontinent,
The outburst of an ecstasy long pent,
Craving the chaste, celestial aureole.
O holy Love! O Love immaculate!
Thou must erstwhile have sprung from earthly
source!
The lips that voiced thee *must* have felt the kiss
Supreme! Or, if they never found their mate;
Or, if they never felt fierce passion's force,
Then what unproved capacity for bliss!

ON THE AVENUE

Who dwells within that opulent abode
Ornate with lush "cartouche" in Gallic style?
And who within that massive-corniced pile —
Of school that from chaste Brunelleschi flowed
Into more florid fields? In such a mode
Must live the lights effulgent who compile
Our history, or the stars who do beguile
Us with their songs. Oh, no! the antipode
Of lights and stars! philistine Pluto lives
Within — not in a hell disconsolate,
But with dear Beauty for his lustrous mate.
No shrieks Proserpina permissive gives
As he doth hale her to a gilded state!
No Ceres weeps at the Hadéan gate!

AUGUST ON THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

SOME sparkling morn before the August rays
Have touched their fierce extreme of midday heat,
From Alban hills descend the white-paved street
Trending to Rome, into the plain ablaze
With withering beams. Then backward turn thy gaze
Upon the fair-limned hazy heights, and meet
The flood of opalescence from a sweet,
Young sky, that laves far crests, and nearer plays
Around the yellow-flowering weeds and grass,
Tintured burnt-red, and brittle thistles brown,
Sere as the blasted empire's awful might
Engulfed in that vast, arid, arch-spanned down,
Where blood-fed poppies bloom upon a mass
Of woe — yet gorgeous in the morning light !

THE FINER VISION

WHEN naught but ambient ugliness prevails ;
When Life is lived in advertised emprise,
With which the strenuous hope to *civilize*
All that is joy to see ; my spirit quails.
Then 'neath the close-pressed lids, there dream-like
sails

Into my view a glorious sight. The skies
More sapphirine appear ; the earth replies
In heightened verdant hues ; the sea exhales
More amethystine tints ; and eyes I know
Expand with ampler love, and gladlier gleam
The sweet incentive smiles, while graces weave
A subtler net. So Milton, in the glow
From inward rays, saw Skies and Earth supreme,
And Man imparadised, and peerless Eve.

AT THE OPERA

HALF only do I hear thy tuneful strain,
O Faust, as gently with love-cadenced air
Thou dost salute the embowered cottage, where
Thy Marguerite, a flower o'er flowers doth reign.
Half only do I hear the soft refrain,
The low impassioned song between the pair,
Delirious pair, heart-crazed, on whom the fair,
Blanc moon doth mutely wax and silent wane.
Half only do I hear ; for I am thrall'd
By haunting words, melodious e'en as thine,
Brave Faust, and interlace of vows as meet,
When blossom-fragrance and the white moon called
To tryst in distant, garden'd lands divine,
A maid as sweet as thou, dear Marguerite.

TO A CRITICAL FRIEND

THOU chidedst me with smiles the other day,
Because I wore some bauble that did cry
Discordance in thy gray, fastidious eye
With my own character, and thou didst pray
Me quick the sinning gaud to cast away,
Wearing a nobler thing that would belie
Me not, and yet completely satisfy
Thy taste. But I have dared to disobey
Thine issued fiat, gentle arbiter,
For still I wear the flashing frippery,
And still do risk thy glance importunate.
Not that I deem that thou in Art didst err ;
But I should err to end this warranty
Of zeal for what concerns my daily state.

AT SUNRISE

My Maker, how I thank thee for this morn,
This ardent morn that upward rolls its fire
To heaven's crest, and withal to mansions higher
Illuminates a prostrate spirit shorn
Of light ! I thank thee for this beacon, born
Of ebon shades, wherewith to guide desire
To goals sublime — a splendor to inspire
The greater, and the lesser thing to scorn !
And, O my Maker, hold this spiring force
To true intent, unswerving in its flight ;
And let there be no earthward trending sway ;
No waning afternoon ; no proneward course ;
No sinking seaward, nor obscuring night ;
But ever upward, as this Rise of Day !

HOKOUSAI-BUONARROTI

I

OLD Hokousai said that all the fruit
From his great toil before his seventieth year
Was not worth thought; though, should he persevere
And live in labor till he did salute
His eightieth birthday, he might execute
Some fairly goodish thing: but should he clear
His ninetieth, then all mysteries would appear
Unveiled, outspoken, that hitherto were mute.
And, furthermore, if he should chance to see
His hundredth — toiling aye — he did maintain
His skill would reach a marvelous degree.
And could he here a decade more remain,
A line — a point — expressed suggestively,
Would sum the fancies of his brimming brain !

HOKOUSAI-BUONARROTI

II

BUT Buonarroti in his mellow age
Turned from his idol Art to the Supreme.
Nor in his full submission did he deem
Of moment his life's task — the parentage
Of master-works: nor did he proudly gauge
His craft before the Lord, nor high esteem
His triumphs of the past, nor fondly dream
On future crowns, nor larger appanage
For man. He said not, boasting, "I did limn
The Vault," "I carved Mosaic majesty,"
"I raised the mighty Dome till seraphim
Harped round it." Nay, in all subserviency
He did in verse his nothingness record —
"There is no good in me without Thee, Lord."

TO A SARCOPHAGUS, "THE MOURNERS"

(IMPERIAL MUSEUM, CONSTANTINOPLE)

If happiness it be for those who die,
To rest in peace within a sculptured shrine
In taste so exquisite, and of design
So eloquent, that he who passes by
Thrills at the sight ; if sweet it be to lie
Encircled by a noble guardian line
Of fair, sad, gentle women who repine
Immutably ; then he must testify
To bliss who sleeps within this shapely tomb.
Should they who in the life beloved us well,
And spurred us to the good by swerveless trust,
Stand kindly round us in the lasting bloom
Of carven grace — each a dear sentinel —
Surely the Heart would beat though it were Dust.

SENECTUTIS CARMEN

METHOUGHT the year was at its barren end ;
That Autumn in her deepest organ tones
Had valediction pealed ; that Nature's bones
Unfleshed by timely travails which attend
A fruiting opulent, would shortly blend
Their pallor with the snows. Yet to the zones
Of hills the sun once more his softness loans,
And spreads incumbent shades where willows wend
Their social way with rills, and glamor gives
To dying Life. And can it be that I
Who deemed the requiem sung 'fore sturdy men,
Who paled beside the glowing thing that lives —
Into the teeth of Dis shall thrust the lie ?
That I with fruitful fire shall flame again ?

“NOT TO ADMIRE OR DESIRE”

STEEL thyself, O heart ! Aye, close thy port
Turned adamant to that predestined pain,
Harsh fruit assured, when in exalted strain
Thou dost impregn some dream, alas too short,
With headstrong, swift desire. Thou dost but court
Cold death, when unadmonished thou wouldst gain
Beatitude within fell Passion's fane
Steel thyself, O heart ! Be not the sport
Imperiling of every wheedling air
That seeks to woo thy spiced flowers — to rob
Their essence in mere play, and then to part
With them inodorous and sere. Have care
To close thine adamantine gates, and throb
Indifferent ! Oh steel thyself, frail heart !

WHEN BLEAK WINDS BLOW

Do memories serve on such an afternoon
As this — when sunshine seems mere specious stain
On icy, wind-scourged streets — to ease the pain
Of actuality? What if I swoon
To dream-land, and therein caressed by boon,
Mild airs, gaze far across the violet main,
Barred with the beryl, and descry a chain
Of whitened towns — whiter than wintry moon
Against the void — impearled upon the shore,
And sight the glacis of the lava-cone
Exhaling roseate incense to the skies?
Yet, is it worth the waking, to restore
These blooming scenes, when in a chilling zone
We are securely lodged by holiest ties?

AH, WHAT A SONG!

(IN A BASILICA)

MAKE me a song as splendid as this shrine,
Fair Muse — thy work — and let its solemn weight
Rest on a massive row coördinate
Of snow-white shafts, with veinings pavonine,
Leading adown the lessening polished line
The spell-bound eyes into the mystic state,
God-crowned, of spheréd apsis consecrate —
The noble climax of a grand design.
Then gild the Corinth-caps, and fill the space
Of feigné heaven with all the majesty
Of august forms, telling a sovran tale.
Make me, O Muse, a song alike in grace,
In plenitude, in thralling potency.
Ah, then, indeed, would laureled bards wax pale!

SIMILITUDES

Not so unlike the young year and the old!
 Rosy the buds of Spring, which, here and there
 Beneath the balm of more indulgent air,
 Burst into tender life of greenish gold —
A ruffling, aureate filigree on cold,
 Celestial blue! Pearly the clouds, that stare
 At their own pearliness, beholden where
 Reflecting freshets vernal fields infold!
So in benignant Indian Summer time
 Soft zephyrs agitate deciduous leaves,
 Saffron and waning red; while flooded meads
Respond to bluish skies — as though in prime
 The year, whose last brave show deft interweaves
 These living colors with its funeral weeds!

TO A SPIRIT

Oh come no more in dreams to ruffle me,
For I have hung the laurel on thy tomb.
Oh come no more to me in softest bloom
Of youth supreme, for calm as effigy
Enmarbled, passionless, I ever see
Thee in my ranging thoughts, while I assume
The burden of my daily claims, or plume
My wings to soar in sombre rhapsody.
But when I see thee ardent in my sleep,
As thou wert wont to be, so winning fair,
With promptings in thine eyes like to the star
Of Love, thou hopelessly away dost sweep
All calm resolves; and when the night doth wear,
Thou seem'st so unattainable and far!

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE — AN INVOCATION

I

TEACH me, immortal Masters of the past,
How to the aggregated honied store
Of beauty absolute, ye added your
Sweet dole ; and how ye wistful coaxed the vast,
Transmitted science to your moods, nor cast
Aside its pith, as so much pithless lore ;
But with a wise adroitness what before
Was good ye bettered. Yet of your amassed,
And winnowed knowledge let me not be slave,
Mere copyist of some world-blazoned deed,
A variant-maker of transcendent things —
The which ye never were. But I would crave
Your messages, and then would see ye speed
Aloft, for aye, on argentine, swift wings.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

II

COME now, O Life, and tell me of thy ways,
Come now, O Love, and touch an alien heart,
Come now, O Flame, and to my soul impart
An ecstasy that on broad vans may raise
It zenith-wards. Teach me, O Sight, to gaze
On Nature's wealth, to note how sure the art
With which she works, and how she gluts her mart
With rich suggestiveness, she fain displays
To those who seek. Teach me, O sculpturing Sea,
How thou dost whorl the nacreous shell's volute,
And thou, O Land, how thou dost deck thy bowers,
And, changing Sky, how thou the galaxy
Dost belt at night, and in the day on mute,
Dark clouds dost paint the rainbow after showers.

TO DAMON

My friend, I love thee for the female strain
That in thy quiet mood I note in thee.
At times thou surgest like the Northern Sea ;
More oft thy bosom trembles to the rain
From summer clouds. And when thou dost enchain
Me with a smile of tender sympathy,
Soft as a girl's, then thou dost seem to me
Like some Greek deity, who doth maintain
His godhood high with dignity and grace,
With splendid strength, and winning gentleness —
That Hermes, let us say, who doth beguile
The infant Bacchus with the grape. His face
Divine doth with heroic power impress ;
Yet if he oped his lips — 't would be to smile.

ENFORCED INACTION

I

To rock among the doldrums with one's nerves
On edge ; to list to idle flap of sail,
And hear the swish of ropes, the futile wail
From inert, stanchest tackle that well serves
To brace when straining rigging leeward curves
In graceful arcs before the buckling gale ;
To gird for promised energies that fail
Coeval with their birth, for wind that swerves
From its true path ; nor yet alert to know —
If ever — whence will draw true purpose-breeze ;
Ah, that I hold is misery indeed !
To wait equipped, heroical, nor show
Impatience at the languid, scoffing seas,
Aye, that I deem o'ertops a warrior's meed !

ENFORCED INACTION

II

To windward just within the ken of eye,
 From windward on the utmost verge of sea —
Where heaven doth wed it in passivity —
An azure line divorcing it from sky
Inflates its foaming girth till white caps high
 O'ercrest dread curling walls, awhile our lee
Deep-dips into the moat before the free,
Fierce gales that swoop to universal cry.
Danger is there in the pounding surge?
Joy in use of atrophying thew?
Distress that we may never love again,
Nor taste its velvet pledge? Nay! Whirlwinds urge
 To acts, to wrestle with the froth-flecked blue,
 To revel in the wassail of the main!

THE ITALIAN TONGUE

THIS noble tongue doth type its glorious land.
The liquid ebb and flow of cadenced sound
Sings like the sapphire waves that smooth redound,
Only to pulse again on sighing strand.
Distinct each vowel stands, as salient stand
Swart cypresses at vesper-time around
Some shrine; yet soft as silvery hillocks crowned
With airy olives pale. In structure grand,
As that heroic range which doth entwine
Its diadems with pearl-set clouds — now blue,
Now rose, according to the flitting shine,
Or shade — the immemorial Apennine.
A tongue most apt the tenderest heart to woo,
Or thunder in the monumental line.

TO A CHILD

COULD I but guide thee through the lowering mist,
Then would I take the lesser part in fight,
And stand true sentinel throughout the night
That masks the panoplied antagonist
Ripe to ensnare. Were I an exorcist,
Then from the darkness would I conjure light,
And by the potency of some cryptic rite
From rue the sweetest influence enlist.
Upon the floriate hillocks of a land —
Red with the poppy, gray with serest grass,
Crimson with joy, ashen with deeds that cry
To ages in their shame — great watch-towers stand,
Alert and isolate, in tested mass
Bulwarks supreme. And so, dear heart, stand I !

REMINISCENT

Oh, the exceeding beauty and the pain
Of that fair hour along the wooded crest,
The far horizon-stretch of hills caressed
By swooning mists, bathed in a golden rain
Of satiate love, which Sun on westward wane
Had poured upon requiting Earth, thrice blest
With consummation of a hope expressed
In happy irised hues from peak to plain.
Then was I aching with a fell desire
As yet unquenched, nor ever to be quenched,
And heard the mutual pulse — alas, not mine!
And saw the impassioned rays of trembling fire
Wrap the warm heights in amorous perfumes
drenched,
And felt the breath of love — alas, not thine!

TO BERENICÉ

I

Not one triumphant line hast thou inspired
In all my verse that bears sweet reference
To thee — though freighted with a love immense.
For in my dreams thou comest not attired
In victor's golden chlamys, and bright fired
Withal by thine heart-issued flame intense,
To utter words of burning eloquence
That might exalt me to a singing, quired
By cherubim. Nay, palely dost thou beam
Like Star of twilight after hours of tears
Have saddened darkling Nature's wearied face.
Thou dost not gild my song with joyous gleam,
Yet am I glad, indeed, if it appears
That thou hast touched it with a sombre grace.



TO BERENICÉ

II

THOUGH dazzling adolescence crowned thy mien,
And thy fair flesh should not unworthy be
To wear proud Aphrodite's girdle — she
Who sprang from less white ocean's foam — a Queen
To some, to others Hell — and should the sheen
Of clustered Pleiads sparkle in thy free,
Love-laden eyes ; and should I raptured see
Thee faultless-formed — divine — as when serene,
And unabashed, transcendent Phryne dips
Into the waves before the straining men
Of thronging Greece : and were the melody
Of glowing Sappho on thy lyric lips ;
Yet hadst thou *kindness* not withal — ah then,
O Berenicé, thou wert naught to me.

TO BERENICÉ

III

ONLY a model ! yet she comes to me
In all her fairness for a paltry pay ;
Not bold, or coy, but in the frankest way
Striving to please. Nor does it need my plea
Enforced to show with guileless vanity
Her elegant, white limbs' harmonious sway ;
Or light upon the argent breasts' display ;
Or shadings into loveliest mystery
Of softest tones incarnadine. Oh yes,
Only a model ! yet she gladly brings
Her choicest all, and gives ; nor asks for pain
In payment — naught but coin. But to possess
Some petty gift from thee — the falterings
Of thy frail heart — costs hundredfold her gain.

TO BERENICÉ

IV

WHAT do ye know of them who smite the lyre,
Ye prim, immaculately mannered maids,
Who pen within decorous palisades
The tamest, best preened fowl — those who admire
Your coy, imperious ways, nor aught desire
Than that which flatters you, and self degrades?
What know ye of the Eagle that invades
The utmost skies, and darkens the Sun's fire
With spread of virile wings; that soaring courts
The mad, unbridled storm-clouds, and the great,
White poignant peaks of heaven, forever free
From fecundating rain; that fierce consorts
With some congenial, wild, impassioned mate,
Eager to bear him loftiest company?

BERENICÉ?

V

AND who may wayward Berenicé be,
You ask? But I discreetly answer not,
Save this — if chance to-day has cast my lot
With Madeline, lithe as the flexile tree
That flees too amorous airs, it may be she.
But if in some provoking posied spot,
I find my Rosamond, and heed with what
Spontaneous eyes and smiles she lureth me,
Why then 't is Rosamond. Yet when unmoved
By visual maid I give my fancy play,
And fashion my sweet love with pearls it gleans
From each, e'en then it is not clearly proved
That this ideal is she ; for well it may
Be really Berenicé, queen of queens.

KINDNESS I

A QUESTION OF CASUISTRY

OUR conscience-flame oft flickers in the air
That wavers with an alternating mood,
Nor always trendeth true towards rectitude,
As firm trade-winds trend true, which favoring bear
The bark to its inevitable lair.
For if with fealty to a code indued,
Or if in sanctimony deep imbued
We should, to save our souls, unswerving swear
Allegiance to truth only, yet should wound
A tender heart by rigid loyalty —
Aye, wound it to the quick, a gentle heart
That should be spared — should not our speech be
pruned
With some soul-compromising chivalry?
Should we not Mercy to our words impart?

KINDNESS II

THE SOWING

OH sow the seeds of kindness everywhere
With lavish palms! In thy fastidiousness
Choose not the soil alone that has excess
Of nutriment, but cast them, too, on bare
And arid wastes where God alone can care
To raise them — aye, perchance He may, and bless
Thy zeal. Cast forth thy seeds! thou canst not guess
The harvesting: for e'en among the tare
And thistle they may wax. Have I not seen
Vermilioned poppies vaunt upon a wall
Soilless and parched? and sturdy dark fringed trees
Spring from the riven crags? and spirits clean
Among the unclean thrive? Then cast thine all
With broadest hands, and it may root like these.

KINDNESS III

THE REAPING

THOU didst but little know, O gentle One,
When to a stranger thou wert frankly kind
As is thy wont, that thou didst deftly bind
With medicating balm a soul undone —
A body broken in life's racking run.
For thou, in truth, perceivedst not a mind
Devoid of play reciprocal, nor blind
To thy swift tearless clouds, nor to the sun
Of thy bright smile — such is the human power
To masquerade. And though 't were impulse free —
Not will — to charm him to forgetfulness,
Yet is he grateful for the happy hour,
And afterglow of sweet immunity;
And thy remembered face will ever bless.

AN EPISODE

(TO E. T.)

HAPPY the hour when you were moved to say,
 " This sanest, sweetest month of June doth naught
 Avail me now, and that which should have brought
 Mind's ease doth bring it not. Come, let us play
Upon the waiting wall a summer's lay —
 The sougling trees, and fragrant meadows fraught
 With daisies white and gold, and grasses caught
 By softly errant airs, and vapors gray,
That lave the uplands and the loftier hill."
 And as the picture grew apace, despite
 The tempting lure to temporize, I came
To know you well. Could but my craftsman's skill
 Arise coequal to your high thoughts' height,
 In modesty I might consort with fame !

TO FOUR ANGORA CATS

O GLAUCOUS-EYED, whiter than swirls of snow !
And thou, O tawny one with amber eyes !
And thou, O Maltese-gray ! — Where ocean lies
On shallow sands, so clear and greenish show
Thine orbs ! — And where pale sky reposes low
Upon the frosty hills, so harmonize
Thy light-blue eyne with fleecy fur that vies
With fay-bleached wool ! How all your move-
ments flow
Into harmonious lines, whether ye start
With thews alert, or in a ravishment
Of ease pose like a couchant sphinx in Art !
And in refinement's ways how diligent !
What gratitude ye to your song impart —
What ecstasy of unconceived content !

TO A CARTOON

SHEATHE thy keen sword, and lift the olive pale,
Gemmed with its purple fruit, the gonfalon
Of Peace—and let it silvery stream upon
Fresh, halcyon airs, that commerce-scented trail
A fleet's perfume, when on the seas prevail
All amities — yet ever and anon,
Beclouded by the godless cannon's wan,
Involving breath, and vocalized by hail,
Ravening to carnal goal. No more, no more,
My Country, such expression fell of power!
Nor would I see thee lulled to strifeless rest,
Or self-content — but ever to the fore
In works that make for Excellence, that tower
Preëminent in Peace — a bloodless Best.

CONVINCING HOMILIES

WHAT easy stuff for affluent folk to talk
Of honesty, whose chiefest daily task
Is how to spend ! For them to wear the mask
Of rectitude is play ! But does the hawk
In appetite the unwary song-bird stalk
For the mere stalking's pleasure ? Does he ? Ask
The thief why he thieves ! Perhaps to bask
In some good woman's smile ; perhaps to walk
Into a hungry home full-handed — not
For thieving's sake. In verity I 'd see
Our preachers wealth-shorn, more alike to what
The Messiah was — sharing in poverty
With the sore-tempted ones their grievous lot :
Then might they preach a thrilling homily !

SILENCE

LET me but catch once more a murmuring low —
So gentle that alone the tensest ear
From Nature's throbs can sift the accents dear—
The sweet impulsive tones that once did flow
From candid thought, and voiced the heart's frank glow.
Let me but once again — once only — hear
Thy raiment-rustle ! Then a boding fear
Will be allayed, and I shall surely know
That thou still liv'st for me. The ripe, tall grain
Quails at the silence that precedes the crash ;
And gentle flowers pale at threatening fate ;
And gallant warriors watch with nervous strain
The lanyard-pull that ushers in the flash ;
And I ? In everlasting dread I wait !

PATIENCE, YE FRAGILE ONES!

PATIENCE, ye fragile ones ! Let not your hope
Take sudden flight on apprehensive wing,
Nor yield to a despair unreasoning,
Because in pain was cast your horoscope.
Oh bear in mind how they with odds did cope
The glorious Few, who, with the poisoned sting
Of death inoculate, did smiling wring
The crown from startled victory, and ope
The gates of Fame. In moments of eclipse
They builded in heroic rhapsody
Great haloed things, and to their parchéd lips
Sprang wondrous words : and when in some degree —
And for brief, yearned-for hours — their sun was free
To shine, they made these dreams reality.

TO ART STUDENTS

I

TALL is the pine that makes the noble mast
From which a nation's symbol'd honor floats ;
Lofty the elm that graciously devotes
Its labored growth to ample shadows cast
In summer time. Against the zenith vast,
The royal maples flame as antidotes
To its bewildering blue, when hoar-frost coats
The sring dales. And thou, sweet violet, hast
Thy sphere — O lowly one that to cool sod
Dost cling. And valley-lily, thou — and thou,
White blossom, couched in shiny leaves that nod
To southern airs — to help ye well know how ;
For ye can cheer a poor, sick-burdened bed,
Or crown with innocence a fair bride's head.

TO ART STUDENTS

II

Not all the flora are commensurate,
Nor all your statures of an equal height :
But if ye act according to the light
Which God hath set in you, and wisely mate
Your deeds with your capacities, nor bate
One jot your highest reach, and surely sight
Your talents' goal, and thither guide your flight
Unswervingly ; ye will not blame your fate
That ye are not as tall as taller ones.
Waste not the hours in air too rarified,
Nor sacrifice the gift the world doth need
In these crude days when gilded Mammon's sons
Hold high the head. With every thew applied
Sow broad the fallows with minutest seed.

ANGLO-SAXON DOMINATION

WHAT would ye have? world-wide similitude?
The Anglo-Saxon signet everywhere —
Force regnant on a field of gold o'er spare,
Starved Charm supine? Would ye forsooth exclude
All varied loveliness? would ye obtrude
Your tasteless, Procrustesian ways which pare
All shapes to market-needs, that thenceforth bear
The impress of a domination crude?
What would ye have? a day alike a day,
And night alike a night eternally?
Always the wind that romps from polar star,
Or southern cross? Along your tedious way
One petaled tone, one plastic harmony —
Nor that most fair — in reaches regular?

MEMORIAL DAY

(GETTYSBURG)

BETWEEN the martial trumpets of to-day
And echoing bugles of a vivid past,
Which thrilled a Nation's youth with war-born blast,
My roving fancies many a scene survey ;
But none more sadly sweet than that fair lay
Of bounteous land which the great Sculptor cast
In genial mould of Peace. I saw it grassed
With May-time's tenderest green and o'er it stray
The soft-paced shadows from a dreamy light ;
While on the horizon dozed the mountains blue.
'Twixt ridge and ridge there lies a fertile plain
Where peach-trees bloomed and corn. Here the great
fight
Was won, that changed the summer's harvest-hue
To color of the interwoven slain.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MOSAICS

SUPREMACY still it is, supremely still !
 Athwart the ebon dome of unmooned night
 Pierce the sharp, vibrant stars. O holy light !
 The noble trees, the densely wooded hill
Loom stately in their blurred forms, and fill
 The soul with awe by their imposing might —
 Their mystic mass. And now in second sight
 I seem to stand within the death-like chill
Of some great apse, solemn, and mute, and dark :
 Above me range a mighty, august line
 Of sombre forms that deep the heart impress ;
While through the incensed gloom a shimmering spark
 From golden inlay silently doth shine.
 How great the Art by very Artlessness !

RAPHAELITES AND PRERAPHAELITES

THE sky is dappled with a silvery mist,
Through which the sun half-breaks with shrouded
gleam,
Like to a veiled eye that doth half-beam
Its fuller promise of the future tryst.
The distance is involved in amethyst ;
And vernal grasses travel with the stream ;
And buds portend a blossoming supreme ;
And ye, O fruitful, southern Airs how whist
Ye are ! Anon the unclouded sun will shine
From out the voided field of flawless blue,
And buds will bloom beneath soft Auster's breath.
But while the budding is the promised sign
Of fairest, fullest Life which must ensue,
That fullest Life suggesteth only Death.

A COLD JUNE DAY

GAY June, as is her wont, has donned her dress
Of deepest green ; and vari-colored flowers—
Filching their tints from summer's irised showers—
On billowing fields their heightening hues impress.
And yet it is a specious loveliness !
For keen winds blow, and all the honied bowers
Hoard their sweet fragrance, while the poor chilled
hours
Pass shivering by, disowned and comfortless.
And there, indeed, are many faces fair —
And seeming soft as this bleak morn of June —
That 'neath their canon-perfect features wear
A soul as frigid as the wintry moon.
And there are spoken words that cannot sway,
Though plausible as this bright, heartless day.

ON THE PIER, NEW YORK

I

WHILE walking on the tide-washed river pier,
I saw the Italian brow, low crowned, with hair
Drawn back and knotted simply — as doth wear
Her locks, Love's goddess, waving o'er the ear
To gather in a cresting coil. 'T was clear
This brow was modeled nigh the columned square
Bedewed with gemel-fountain spray, and where
The great Dome dominates. For only here
Are born these women of the noble mien
Whose puissant necks majestically set
On massive busts, bear burdens with the free,
And stately carriage of a gem-crowned queen.
Yet as I gazed, I could not drown regret,
And sadly sighed my heart across the sea.

ON THE PIER

II

AND yet this yearning for an alien shore
Is but the craving for a happiness
That cannot be for ardent men ; unless
With perfect beauty there be proffered more
Than its own charm ; unless they hear Life's roar ;
Unless they fling into the daily stress,
And battle for the ultimate success
Of some supreme ideal, that heretofore
The world has known not, or could not attain.
If ever Life did grant a boundless scope,
If ever Life did hold aloft the bays,
Ready to crown the humblest hand or brain,
And recompense with golden gain, and ope
The ports of Fame — 'T is in this Land — these
Days.

ON THE PIER

III

ON what a blessedness to dwell secure
In climes caste-free ; to breathe the wholesome air
Sweet with a consciousness of worth, and where
The keen four-quartered winds hound off the impure,
Debasing germs of kingship, which insure
A growing impotence from heir to heir !
And if it be that on the glittering stair
Of Fortune, heaven-high, the man obscure
Doth mount, and then play tyrant with his gold,
And crush the many 'neath his weight of wheel —
Or even buy the fasces of a State —
We must deplore, yet not despair ; for cold,
Hard Chance that did enact, may yet repeal,
And leave him shivering at her icy gate.

ON THE PIER

IV

INDOMITABLE Eagle, calm thine eye
Fierce-raging, and thy cruel talons keep
Whetted alone for jackals that would creep
Within our prosperous, peaceful cotes to ply
Their thieving trade. Spread out thy vans, O high,
And holy Emblem, that beneath their sweep
Thy callow, nursling brood awhile may sleep,
And gather needed strength to amplify.
Thy nursling brood? I mean that scanty band —
The zealots who would strew the fairer things;
Who would estop the sins that compromise
Our sense of Beauty; who would ward the Land
From those vulgarities that barter brings;
And keep it lovely as the virgin Skies.

ON THE PIER

V

AND theirs has been a thorny task, indeed ;
And pitiful the recompense, though great
The toil. Ah, were the gain proportionate
To lavished labor, theirs would be the meed
To satisfy a steel-eyed usurer's greed,
And an astounded "street" would proudly rate
Them "kings." But such ambitions animate
Them not to sow the bullion-bearing seed.
Sweeter they plant, and hope for fruit of praise ;
And look for honor in their generous land ;
And ask for a few leaflets dark and green
To shade the pale, worn brow ; and words to raise
Them upwards — that is all. They crave to stand
Among the *patriots*, laureled and serene.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS

ON thy low porch with knotted hands resigned,
Thou sittest, aged peon, in young May
Serenely gazing at the white array
Of jocund blossoms, mocking the aligned,
Censorious pines that darkly frown behind
The wanton apples, heedless of the day,
When their nude limbs beneath the heavens gray
Shall cry aloud to wintry winds unkind.
What thinkest thou? Of those few smiling hours
Which on thy exigent laborious years
Make bold relief? or of the decades spent
In level, mindless toil? At least there lowers
Not o'er thy view a cloud of unshed tears —
The consciousness of power impotent!

WELCOME TEARS

How sweet and still the vapor-shrouded air,
How deeply green the nap on velvet meads,
As evening cometh in her low-toned weeds
To greet black-mantled night! “’T will not be fair,”
The crickets chirp, and nature everywhere
Seems privy to the rain. The marish reeds
Proclaim it, and the topmost pine that feeds
On milky clouds of dawn, and whatsoe’er
Hath hope of life. And yet I am not sad
As oft I am when darker tempests lower,
That leave their mark through miserable years ;
For now all things that grow seem truly glad
To pass from sunbeams to the coming shower,
From burning joy to soft, relieving tears.

ON READING THE BROWNING
LETTERS (1845-1846)

O LOVE, when thou dost hold in blinding bond
E'en lofty hearts — if bondage can be called
To stand lid-closed in paradise enwalled —
With scorn for other hearts that correspond
Thou girdest them. Whate'er may be beyond
Their flowery close; whate'er may be installed
In trimmer garths; whate'er may be enthralled
In ravishment, entranced by Eros' wand,
Is less. But yet your lover's insolence
Most gladly we condone, ye noble twain:
For chance because of it ye do coerce
A sympathy for love's exchange intense,
And spiritual, which *she* who lived in pain
Wrought into high, incomparable verse.

ASPIRATION

Ye spell me, O ye tree-tops, thrusting high
Your darksome domes and pinnacles that pale
The enameled vault, and raise to blinding scale
The aggregated clouds, and glorify
Their glory. On the ample blue they lie
Like full-sparred yachts with spread of shining sail
Incredible, when summer airs prevail.
Ye spell me, O ye tree-tops, for the sky
Envelops you, nor do my lifted lids
See whence nor how ye rise, nor from what soil
Your delving roots draw life, whether from mire,
Or purer earth ; from that which God forbids,
Or grants ; by hallowed or unhallowed toil.
I only know that ye to Heaven aspire.

TO SOME HISTORIANS OF ART

“Light is a Modern Quality.”

WHENE’ER I hear this careless utterance
From Art’s high-priests, forthwith there come to me
Dissenting visions of Antiquity,
And dreams demurring of the Renaissance —
The pictured peristyles and halls that dance
With light in gay Pompeii by the sea,
And Livia’s villa bright with fruiting tree,
With flowers and birds ; and our inheritance
Of frescoed walls — *fresh* as the name implies —
From Giotto of the monumental mien
To Tiepolo, who touched Gleam’s utmost height.
And yet these sanctioned prophets overwise
Aver that moderns — O conceit serene ! —
Reissued God’s decree “ Let there be Light ! ”

FOR TERSENESS

AFTER the briered thicket, and the dense,
Impervious, harshly tangled forest-ways,
With what relief from effort spent we gaze
Upon the unhindered ocean's void immense,
The spread of glebe, or noble eminence
Without a fleck — save where some shade obeys
A cloud superior, and swift, ardent rays
Hot follow it. Oh, with what grateful sense,
Emergent from the brambled growth of word,
Locution tortuous, and phrase that limps
From lecture-room — where scientists compile
Their barbarous terms, and paraphrase absurd —
On some terse page we catch a sudden glimpse
Of thornless periods in the classic style !

AFTER-STORM

THE tasseled maize wind-smitten prostrate lies,
And wide the encumbered earth is thickly strewn
With ripening fruit, with leaves and ramage hewn
From sturdier limbs ; and not a flower flies
Its oriflamme (prone flowers that we did prize
For flawless comeliness!) since still the noon
Cloud-ceiled withholds the tender rays which soon
Will lift them towards regenerating skies.
But yet not scathless! For in truth I trow
That every wrath-burst leaves an ingrained scar.
Then, O my Love, forever hold afar
The quarrel from us twain, nor let thy brow
Be gathered, nor its smoothness ever mar ;
But let it spotless gleam, as it gleams now !

TO A GREEK TEMPLE

I

THIS morn I chanced to scan the graven plate
Of a Greek temple, and I pondered long
Upon its perfectness, awhile a throng
Of thrilling reveries did high elate
Me as I thought how it was generate —
This beauty absolute, this builded song,
Symmetric, monumental, pure, and strong,
Simple in mass, and yet most adequate
In its details — in faith, a perfect thing ;
Because succeeding artists deemed it wise
Within their straitened boundaries to strive
To better what seemed best, nor yet to ring
An over-personal note, nor compromise
By *self* those eurythmies that still survive.

TO A GREEK TEMPLE

II

THRICE happy thought that came to quickening Greek
To cap his temple with a Victory,
Winging adown the azured canopy,
To light upon the culminating peak
Of sculptured pediment, and thence to speak
Approval of the Gods ; while zephyrs free
Soft swirl her limning draperies, as she
Doth crown this paragon of the antique
With the uplifted laurel. Ah, what bliss
To terminate with some enwreathed renown
Whatever we may earnestly have sown,
Whether it may attain, or likelier miss,
Our heartiest hope. But oh — but oh to crown
Perfection from its very corner-stone !

TO A GREEK TEMPLE

III

To preface daily duty it is well
To contemplate some passing loveliness
In art or nature, that it may impress
Upon our work's routine its soaring spell,
And counteract the ingenious-fabricked hell
Which man creates in order to possess
A garnered opulence far in excess
Of his own need and certain to impel
His progeny to vicious sloth. This sight
Of Beauty at toil's dawn — though it give place
To searing sights — does for the fainting soul
What the refreshing dew of nurstling night
Does for the earth's sun-smitten, drooping face —
Lifts and sustains, till day achieve its goal.

NATURE'S CHARM

ENCHANTMENT lies not in the acquired name,
Nor in the mastered laws of Nature's ways
Which in their operations aye amaze
Us by their subtleties — so oft the same
For faintest sparklet and Life's fullest flame.
To know is well. Yet when I raptured gaze
Upon the play of vibrant, quivering rays
Through wind-blown leaves in June, shall I declaim
On Botany? or shall I laud the light,
Glinting through ramage as a maiden's eyes
Glint through her flitting moods? Or when I see
Convolving cumulus that blinds the sight,
Forcing to blackness trees that fringe the skies
What then, what then is Forestry to me?

VOX POPULI

WHAT makes, you ask, ephemeral, blatant fame?
In faith, a modicum of talent spent
With tact, and the vociferous assent
Of two or three high-priests, who wholly claim
The public ear. Aye, they can fan to flame
A very moderate ash. They give full vent
To reflex praise; and that dear element
In man, which, as in foolish sheep, doth aim
At mimicry in order to exist
In mindless ease — in order to appear
Alike to other sheep within the pen —
That element will play evangelist
To their most sacred words — and you will hear
It bleating through the world “Amen,” “Amen.”

STINT NOT THY PRAISE!

If thou hast cause to laud, stint not thy praise!
Yield it with clarion tongue unchecked by fear
Of flattery! Yield it as Vesper clear
Yields her abundant, cooling dew, which raise
Sun-swooning things! See how the valley-maize
With rustling leaves that sheathe the bearded ear
Doth welcome her! Do thou, too, bravely cheer
With lifting speech the tired, drooping days
Of the creative soul, when it doth need
High, stimulating words. Thou must not think
It is not chastened by a frequent Blame;
That is its price, and Praise its rarer meed.
It stands more often on the chilling brink
Of Disesteem, than on the crest of Fame!

FAREWELLS

I

FROM some good friend we take a gay farewell,
When blithe he stands upon a mighty ship,
Beaming with prospect of a pleasure trip
To lands unknown, or those that do compel,
By proven charm a thralldom to their spell —
As he who having quaffed from honied lip
Is maddened till the nectar he resip.
Soon wilt thou balance to the cadenced swell,
O friend, of the ungovernable, great sea —
Great in its moods — blue to the sun, and gray
To lowering clouds, and white with whirlwind's spray,
And black to swart, portentous night. But we,
Pleased at thy pleasure, as we bid adieu,
See only calm, and all a heavenly hue.

III

FAREWELLS

II

To say good-bye to some belovéd place
Is sad, wherein associations dear
Have grown coeval with sweet things that rear
Their annual bloom to coaxing skies ; that grace
Our efforts to enhance ; that interlace
Their loveliness with our desire sincere
To beautify a too-ofť blemished sphere —
To guard it from the mania to deface
The noble for mean love of gain. Good-bye
Ye fruiting trees, ye elms, ye evergreens,
That sweep the close-cropped lawns, ye lordly
flowers,
And humbler, useful plants — yet fair to eye —
Berries and creeping vines, and climbing beans,
And all the offspring of the sun and showers !

FAREWELLS

III

WHEN waning Moon dissolves her fringes soft
 Into the void, and when the voiceless flow
 Of osiered streams through channeled meads below
 Is traced by argent exhalations ; oft
Comes gentle Poesy, who, having doffed
 Her prudish, day-time moods, doth spread her glow
 Romantic over verdurous things that grow
 On fields beneath to star-flecked fields aloft.
'T is easier thus, I think, to take that last,
 And tense Farewell, when duty's trump doth call —
 For aye perhaps — thus aureoled by high,
And glamorous light, with loving arms to clasp
 The peerless one that is our all in all,
 And feel the throb of heart — then say "Good-bye!"

FAREWELLS

IV

'T is worse with the soul's counterpart to stand
Face to pale face in some environment
Uncouth — to which sole dignity is lent
By pathos of the scene — and though unmanned,
By an o'ertortured heart's sad legend, and,
Unnerved by dread of what the Omnipotent
Alone foresees, to seem indifferent,
And place a quiet hand in quiet hand.
'T is worse to smother thus the straining fire,
To strangle feeling that aloud would sob,
To bid adieu with level, steadfast gaze
Into the eyes controlled of Love's desire,
When well we know that Misery must rob
Our rightful rest through ever lengthening days.

FAREWELLS

V

AND how felt he who razed Jerusalem
To the dust's level, Zion's conqueror,
Imperial Titus — who in triumph bore
The trophy seven-branched on golden stem —
When adamantine statesmen did condemn
Him to renounce his moist-eyed love, though sore
At heart; when from her ashen brow they tore
Judæan Berenicé's royal gem?
And how felt he when from the Palatine,
Pompous with plundered wealth — the cynosure
Of the impoverished world supine — with grave,
Sad mien she sailed for Syrian shores to pine
Disconsolate? Methinks, much as some poor,
Heart-broken slave, when wrenched from fellow
slave!

FAREWELLS

VI

MELODIOUS Lyrist, thou who didst persuade
The nether gods to grant thy dear request,
And give back life to thy young bride all blest —
Eurydice ; sweet Bard, who didst evade
The Fates wet-cheeked with tears, and through the
shade
From Tartarus didst lightward lead thy best,
Thy loveliest love ; O, Orpheus, what possessed
Thee then to turn thy glances retrograde ?
For, when upon the verge of this bright world,
She faded pleading from thy swooning sight,
Stretching her widowed arms in her desire
To be inseparate, and thence was furled
Into the folds of viewless, final night.
Oh, what availed thee then thy heaven-strung lyre ?

FAREWELLS

VII

Not when the bier descends into the grave
 Burdened with fading tokens of our grief—
 Roses, or wilding flower, or sombre leaf,
 Or violet sad — for then the world we brave.
Not then God's help do we heart-plundered crave,
 But earlier, when the lessening breath-beats brief,
 And faint proclaim the coming sovran thief,
 Black-pennate, who inaudibly doth wave
The stolen soul afar, alas so far,
 So hopelessly afar. And when the eyes,
 Pleaded their final message, say no more ;
And when the form beloved, pale as a star
 At dawn, doth shine unearthly as it lies
 Peaceful at rest — then may we well implore !



LYRICS



EVENING CHIMES

ARE they not sweet
These chimes that come to us on western air
At evening fair,
And rhythmic beat
The dusking vale with softly pulsing feet?

Are they not blest,
These bells that ring their changes on the past?
No bugle-blast
To stirring quest,
They merely float the soul on waves of rest.

Why are they sad
These notes that bring the heart an anodyne,
A hope divine?
No maiden had
A tenderer call at dusk to trysting glad.

Is it the hour,
When whirl of work gives place to poise of eve?
When day-stars weave
With night's a bower
Of pensive shade that has such soothing power?

Is it that night
Is symbol of the end of world-lit days,
And mundane ways ;
And that their flight
Means death-sleep till the dawn of whiter light?

Is it that we
In the diurnal glass of petty life
Self's mirrored strife
Do only see,
Nor heed the universal agony ;

And, when surcease
Activities which turn us from the thought
Of man distraught,
Clear-eyed in peace,
We pray that he may have a like release?

May it perchance
Be that sweet sadness which doth aye abide
At Beauty's side,
And doth enhance
Her state, and musing minds doth deep entrance?

The splendid scene,
That lies illumed by noonday's highest flames,
All joy proclaims,
Yet cannot screen
The serious moods that ever intervene.

Then how much less —
When westering hours, chiming carols sweet,
The night-stars greet —
Can loveliness
Of gray-girt eve our sadder thoughts suppress.

MAY-DAY AFTERNOON, STOCKBRIDGE

SWEET orient Skies — as palest turquoise pale —
How gleam ye o'er the wintry mountain's crest
Tree-woven, where the forest-maids undressed
Their pure white limbs unto glad Spring unveil!
Sweet orient Skies!

Ye dark-armed Pines — as lethal judges dark —
How frown ye in your high forbidding state
On these frail birches whom ye solemn rate
As frivolous! Alack, they do not hark,
Ye dark-armed Pines!

O freshest Grass — as morning zephyrs fresh —
How paintest thou the level river-land
With color far more vivid than the strand
Of emerald in a fairy's jeweled mesh?
O freshest Grass!

Pale Willows lithe— as lithe as lithest girl
From Tanagra, who in Art's plastic days
Did trace her form beneath the chiton's maze —
How smile ye at the angry torrent's swirl !
Pale Willows lithe!

O western Light — as mellow as the glow
On Titian's clouds, sea-born — how dost thou steep
Thyself in gold ? And while cool shadows sleep
Upon the hills, thou gildest all below,
O western Light !

O May divine — as fair as Pleiad fair
From whom thou hast thy naming — Maia sweet,
Who lured the love from Jove — is it not meet
That I should sing thee to the southern air ?
O May divine ?

EXPRESSIONS—A SONG

It is said that in the eyes
 Expression lies,
That in depths of irised wells
The chrism of the soul indwells,
That they lustre e'en at night,
That they echo flitting laughter,
And disclose suppressed delight,
And reveal the grief that after
Bliss o'erclouds the heart contrite.

There are bards who dare to say
 The eyes betray,
That their deeps of which men rave,
Jeweled like Aladdin's cave,
And their Soul-portraying glance,
Are but star-struck lover's glamor,
That they give no utterance,
That the swain they so enamor
Doth but dote as in a trance.

1

FATE

THE breeze was off a-hiding,
The meadows dressed their best,
And August gliding, gliding,
To its September rest.
The glint was on the current where stranded things
sighed "Stay,"
And insects sheened midst sun-motes, like stars on
Milky Way.

The sun was stately falling
Upon the molten west,
Where Earth was calling, calling,
Her lover to her breast.
Then strands of light and shadow wove intertissues gay ;
Then willows arched with graces, like girls of classic
clay.

And we were mutely drifting
In concert with the flow,
That surely lifting, lifting
Towards pale surf below
Things animate and lifeless, that on the surface play ;
While turtles basked in sunshine, like men in their
decay.

And who would say that after,
There might loom up despair,
When naught but laughter, laughter,
Should ring out on the air ?
Yet whirlpools black, sinister, beneath the mirrors lay,
And portents cast their umbrage, like Death on bridal-
day.

Drear, eerie moods were chilling
The joyance of the scene,
And Fate was killing, killing,
The bliss that might have been ;
The Sun sank on indifferent to mortal man at bay ;
But frightened fowl whirled o'er us, like hearts that go
astray.

PREMATURITY

I

O BIRCH, how soon thou dost disrobe this year !
What does it mean
That thou thine aureate sheen
Dost prematurely lose, when nothing else is sear ?

The gleaming phlox doth bloom, and sun-flowers
glow
Beneath a sky
Upon whose bosom lie
Soft halcyon, August clouds, white as December
snow.

O silver, leafless birch ! thou hast not told
Why on the blue
Of pure, celestial hue
Thou spreadest argent limbs, which should be clad in
gold.

Pale yellow butterflies imbibe the breath
That doth exhale
From the aromatic vale —
The aura of sweet Life — whilst thou dost savor Death.

Hath ardent, amorous Sun thy soul's health robbed?
And in thy grief
Hast thou thy gilded sheaf
Shed like hot, brimming tears, when breezes sad have
sobbed?

Or did some woe-born, weeping, lingering cloud
O'ertouch thy heart
And its own rue impart
Till thou in sympathy didst cast thy leafy shroud?

The other trees upon the dappled lawn
Cast soothing shade,
As though their leaves were made
To shield thee when thine own were all too soon
withdrawn.

II

O gentle one, who wast so wondrous fair !

O tell us how

Was scathed thy dawn-like brow !

What dole did streak with silver strands thy golden
hair ?

Hath Love, the Lawless, filched the ruddy flush

Of thy sweet youth ?

If thou shouldst speak the truth,

Would blood incarnadine through thy gray cheeks
now rush ?

Or did some ineradicable grief

Deep thrust its root

Into thy heart now mute —

A heart that shed its bloom, as yonder birch its leaf.

Around thee in thy stress, kind loyal friends
Stand ever near
Thine even-tide to cheer,
And ward whatever ills untoward Fortune sends.

We know that after months of Winter grim
The birch once more
Will bud as oft before :
But when thou budd'st again 't will be with Seraphim.

A TRUANT

I LIE beneath an ample tree —
 Breezes gayly laughing
At leaflets struggling to be free —
 Freshest air a-quaffing.

Through crevices of mellow green
 Flakes of gold are streaming
Adown from skies of violet sheen,
 While I rest half-dreaming.

The arbor-vitæ hedges trim
 Screen from pupils prying
My dalliance with a lazy whim,
 Fancies gratifying.

The swarthy-hearted poppies flame,
 Flaunting mid meek grasses,
But momentary gaze scarce claim —
 Gaze that idly passes

Away from glint of sparkling stream,
Through ripe meadows flowing,
To birdling's wings of tints supreme,
Like the rainbow glowing.

And now it rests on pregnant cloud,
Purpling wood-clad mountain,
Again it flits to opaled shroud,
Mantling o'er the fountain

That heartens fainting blooming things
In the garden growing —
And some are fine as ermined kings,
Others scarcely showing.

How sweet this soothing reverie
Round my will soft-lurking,
Enchaining it when I should be
Profitably working!

COÛTE QUE COÛTE

LEAD thou on with laughter,
 Lead thou on with tears,
 With fearlessness or fears,
And I will follow after
 Down the chance of years.

Whatsoe'er thou doest
 That shall be my guide.
 Forever at thy side —
Whatever thou pursuest —
 I shall aye abide.

Whether thou be saintly,
 Whether thou be wrong,
 Whether weak or strong,
I shall never faintly
 Praise thee in my song.

I shall deck thy kirtle
With roses like the morn —
Roses without thorn :
I shall crown with myrtle,
Shall with love adorn

Thy hallowed hair of maiden
Till it pale with white,
Till it float with night
With mysteries deep laden,
With Death that veils the sight.

IN HARASSED DAYS

THE season saddens with my heart ;
The clouds upon the hemisphere,
The leaves upon their earthy bier
Bespeak its sombre counterpart.

Alas, the energies that fail,
The impulse that no more responds
To listless will, the sundered bonds
Of stanchest strands — and yet so frail !

My Art to me is nothing more
Than casual chill November breeze,
Than wanton wavelets on the seas,
Than shifting sun-strakes on the floor.

I look upon it from above,
As oft I gaze upon, and smile,
Some sweet dead dream that did beguile
A summer's hour — but still was Love.

And yet from moods indifferent,
 'Twixt cycles of a living fire,
 'Twixt epochs of a parched desire,
'Tween flames, alas, that soon were spent ;

From moods — the ashes of a will
 To procreate some vital thing —
 The embers of a love that spring
No more to flame at passion's thrill —

Has blossomed unexpected flower
 More gorgeous from its bitter bed,
 More sweet from acrid tears I shed
Upon its roots — oh, costly dower !

Yes, now perchance, as oft before,
 My soul will luscious fruit again,
 And I may peer the proudest men,
Or glean a tender heart's full store.

Perhaps — yet would it were not so,
For I should rather front kind Death,
And feel his chill, reposeful breath
Than rock in anguish to and fro

From wilding act to unwilled rest,
A plaything to some full romance,
A toy to undetermined chance
That makes or mars in merest jest.

Perhaps — but should there come to me
The average interest in life,
The mediocre aim in strife
Which guarantees tranquillity,

What then? — I know not where to turn,
Unless, an alien to my home,
'Mid soothing wonderments I roam,
And leave behind my ships that burn.

COLOR SCHEMES

A WONDERFUL lesson in color, I ween,
This spread peacock's tail of emerald sheen,
And eyed with great sapphires of heavenly hue !
And so is my parrot of yellow and green
With the least little touch of crimson and blue !

TUNEFUL SADNESS

The half-moon pales upon the orient light
Above an elm-tree's life-worn leaves decaying—
Their opulence of russet tints displaying—
 But yet it is not night.

The sun is burning in the western sky,
And flames the corn-sheaves in the lowlands standing—
Their shadows into level lengths expanding—
 And yet the moon is high.

To radiant gladness my full heart inclines
Aglow with passion for the deeds worth doing,
And sweet achievements placid joys ensuing ;
 But yet a pale thought shines.

The argent pallor of the eastern moon
Doth discord not with western radiance golden ;
Nay, silver is to glowing gold beholden
 For this sweet Autumn tune.

ODE—THY LIGHT, O LORD!

I

O THOU, who dost in wisdom regulate
The bourne of all created things,
 Tell us how far
Upon the lift of individual wings
We may sustain our flight to propagate
Our firm beliefs, nor halt to estimate
The cost; with Truth — as we behold her — for our
 guide,
With Universal Kindness at her side —
 A sister-steering star.
 Or, is it that we are
 And ought to be
Mere fiefmen to Conventionality?
Or hast Thou girded us with Reason's brand,
And armed us with a Conscience-panoply,

And given us both heart and helping hand
To wage a holy fight
For what we deem the right
E'en though our name dishonored be throughout the
land?

II

We hear the bugle throbbing on the air,
And see the bale-fires bickering on the height,
And then we know
Both blast and glow
Mean that the startled Patriot must prepare
To hazard all for Country, wrong or right,
And slake her stimulated appetite
For unoffending blood,
And on the flood
Of victory wreak murder on a lesser state,
And hail the slayer with a guerdon laureate,
And god-proclaiming shout, while leaving to a voice-
less fate,
And to a cold neglect
The unassuming architect
Of some sweet thing, beneficent and great.
Wreaths for destroyers! For those who high create,
Nothing! — O God direct!

III

Tell us how far, O Lord,
We who with willing sword
Would bolt upon the phalanxed foe
Come to annul what our embattled fathers fiercely won,
How far we may in strict allegiance go
Against her will in contest once begun
Unjustly by our Country, at whose word
'T were joy to die
And thenceforth lie
Among the heroic dead, if she a blow incurred,
Tell us how far, O Lord !

IV

To us who ever hope to lead mankind
From out the precincts blind
Of selfish, unfraternal hate,
Into the candid realms of pure Philanthropy ;
To us who in our sweeter Domesticity
Respect the blood-related heart,
And to our words and deeds impart
A kindliness that manifests a heaven-born grace ;
To us who for the ideals of an alien race
Deep reverence feel ;
Who cannot steel
Our softer selves to them, because they do not mate
With our conception of the perfect State ;
To us Thy light reveal !

V

But if the ideals be those of Tyranny ?
 Tell us how far —
 E'en with the shriek of war
 Resounding horribly along ensanguined ways,
 With miseries ineffable that craze
 The unaccustomed eye — how far for Liberty
 We may adventure to enforce our policy
 On an unwilling state, knowing that to be free
 From a paternal, even lenient monarchy
 Means greater self-respect,
 And freer intellect
 To coin unwelcome words to powers that be —
 Yet words that must be coined persistently,
 In order to perfect
 Our present make-shifts for a stable intercourse,
 When Comity shall break the rule of Force ;
 When all shall act in unison
 The precepts of Thy brother-loving One.
 Direct, O Lord, direct !

VI

The Southern breezes softly sway the leaves,
Of shimmering osiers clinging to pale streams,
And grass untrampled with the wild-flowers weaves
A medieval tapestry. The roadway teems
With golden winglets swarming in the beams
Of argent, midday rays.
It is the hour of man's release
From noon's too ardent blaze ;
And everything proclaims a blessed Peace.
And yet in these calm hours they ne'er surcease
Our conscience-throes — nay, rather they increase.

VII

We who in loyalty would serve the State
And try to fashion her firm fabric so,
That every nation, high and low
Upon Earth's latitudes, would mate
Her structure, based on Law, and grandly crowned
With Freedom aureate —
A perfect thing from wing-tip to the ground,
Fair shaped, fair colored, beautiful and sound
In all its parts, and in the whole immaculate —
We who would build her thus,
Spotless and glorious,
Tell us how far
O Lord, we may oppose the factions that would mar
This vision marvelous —
The factions that alone control and shape —
The factions that in selfishness would bar
The inspired act, the unwillingness to ape
The mean and timorous.

Or is it less
Impolitic to acquiesce
In schemes iniquitous,
Our better purpose to effect
Within strict party-lines, forever circumspect ?
O God, direct !

VIII

Would it be well Confusion to invite?
If to our keener sight
The flats of the Law
But palely glimmer on a field of Night —
Like stars that shed an insufficient light —
Shall we accept the fatal flaw
In their light-shedding power, and stumble on our
way
When in our Souls illumed there flames a
bright,
Sufficing star — the searching star of Day?
Or shall we screen
The splendid sheen
Of this intense, god-kindled flame
That we may *be*, and *act* the same
As unilluminated man,
That we may pine within his earthly ban,
That we may live, the servile avatar

Of mediocrity, throughout a false life's span?
Shall we our light conceal?
Thy light, O Lord, reveal,
And let it shine for aye, a beacon secular!

FAREWELL, AUTUMN!

ONCE more, dear land, I tune my parting song
To flaming Autumn's richly inwrought lyre ;
Once more I laud thy sumptuous attire,
Saffron, and gold, and ruby red. Along
The glowing hills frown sombre bands of strong,
Deep green — the spruce and pine — that both
acquire
Solemnity, and lend a fiercer fire,
Like scowlers midst a masquerading throng.
Aye, oft-times have I sung these gauds before,
And now again I sing them as I go :
For who may say what Fate doth hold in store
For us — brow-bent and frail — ere coming snow
Shall melt upon the hills beloved, and roar
In vernal torrents through mild meads below.







